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DANGER!!

Volume 2, Number 8 December 1986

SAVAGE TALES

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Dear Savage Tales,

What more can I say but "wow"? SAVAGE TALES #6 was my first issue and it was great! I've always seen your mag in the stores, but I never bought it. (I know what you're thinking: "What took him so long?")

A couple of stories that I liked best were "The Regulator," "Criss Cross," and Pepe Moreno's "War Zone."

"War Zone" was the best of the bunch. Pepe did solid gold work on that *and* the cover! (The cover art was what made me buy your mag.) So, as long as you have Mr. Moreno doing work for you, you have a new collector of SAVAGE TALES.

Keep it up,
Dave "Mad Dog" Mertz
Wautiesha, WI

P.S. Show some action featuring the Uzi. I caught a glimpse of it on the cover. And how about a story set in Vietnam?

My best regards to Pepe Moreno. He's Number One in my book with his "photo-style" artwork.

Pepe is working on some great stuff for feature issues. If you want the 'Nam, check out The 'NAM, new from Marvel.

Dear Savage Tales,

I really love your magazine. I can't wait to run down to the Seven Eleven to see if they've got in the next issue.

One of the best stories is "Blood 'n' Gutz"; it was so great.

David F.T.W. Bardell
Allen Park, Michigan

P.S. Great lookin' ladies on the cover, whew!!

Hey Savage Dudes,

It's like nothing done before, maybe a bit like Epic and Soldier of Fortune all together.

Also, there are no advertisements; that's good to see for a change.

If SAVAGE TALES #3 had hands, it would've reached out and grabbed me. The cover was definitely poster material. If you have any ideas on putting out posters of your covers, you let me be the first to know.

In #3, in D.X., I saw a letter from a good friend of mine, Leland Distad. I moved to Nova Scotia, and we never got each other's address, so if you'll put this in the letter column, he'll see it and be able to write me. I know he'll be buying every issue.

Thanking you,
Noah Fuller
PO Box 238
Kingston, Nova Scotia
B0N 1R0

Dear Savage Tales,

I just read the sixth issue of SAVAGE TALES, and it has some of the best stories around (like "War Zone" and "Criss Cross" . . . "Tank Town" and the others were okay too).

I agree with Mr. Bravard from the USS Goldsborough, the M-60 is a good weapon but it jams like hell. My dad (a Vietnam vet) doesn't really like the M-60.

Why don't you give the cover girl wearing the black lace and the riding boots a shotgun to blow guys away with?

yours,
Bill Ritcher III
Appleton, Wisconsin

Dear Savvy,

I've been a reader of your magazine since issue #1. Your best stories are none other than "Good Ol' Boys," "Blood 'n' Gutz," and "5th to the 1st." Is there any chance that "Criss Cross" will be continued? Also, how 'bout a story on ninjas, or something about modern day chopper fighters? Anyway, keep up the good work, and you'll have a reader for life!

Michael Montour
Dbn. Hgts., Michigan

Matter of fact, yes. "Criss Cross" is the first installment of the "Skellhunter" series. We aim to keep it going awhile, too.

Dear Savages,

I really love your magazine. "Blood 'n' Gutz" is the best. The artwork is really great.

I just want to say that you all have a bloody great magazine.

Scott Brewer
Bartlett, Tennessee

Dear Savage Tales,

ARRAAGARAGG!! Your "Skellhunter" kicks *@#*+!! I was upset to find out that there'd be no more "Blood 'n' Gutz," but now "Skellhunter" fills the shoes and then some.

I am also writing in response to a letter you printed in #2, which said, "This is the magazine to read when listening to Exodus or Motorhead." I agree. Your writers should plug into some Slayer or Venom, it's the pick 'em up, thrash 'em around sound that might inspire your writers to do a certain type of story.

So here in the summary: DEATH METAL and SAVAGE TALES are my escapes from the daily horrors!!!

It's my feeding time now, so I must pay you a fair adieu!

Roy Graham
Atlantic country Asylum

Dear Savage Tales Crew,

I think you are doing a great job. You write stories about the two things I like, Vietnam stories (5th to the 1st) and biplane battles (SkyWarriors). As another letter said, "You should do a story using the girls on the covers!" Your artists are terrific! The pin-ups are great, but you need more of 'em. By the way, tell Doug Murray and Michael Golden to get on the ball and get their strip done faster; they've only made two so far.

Doug H. Greiner

William Johnson is busy working on "Man's Best Friend," a steamin' story about the two cover girls. Look for it. But don't expect more Murray and Golden; they've got their hands full with The 'NAM . . . check it out!

Gentlemen,

I've purchased all of the SAVAGE TALES comics, and I'm looking forward to more. I notice that several of your letters to the editor mention a dislike for western comics. I want you to know that is the reason I purchase SAVAGE TALES. The John Severin and Gray Morrow stories were excellent, especially "Raid" by Severin, and "Mexican Standoff" by Morrow. The Severin stories remind me of the ol' "Two Fisted Tales" comic of the '50s. I have a lot of the Atlas westerns with Severin's art in them, too.

Anyway, keep up the good work, and keep the westerns by Severin and Morrow, and I'll continue to buy SAVAGE TALES. Thanks a lot.

Richard Lundy
Wichita, Kansas

Dear soldiers, mercenaries, and regular savages,

SAVAGE TALES is just the magazine for anyone who has ever dreamed of plugging an outlaw with a Colt Peacemaker, or of splashing through a rice paddy and bullet-riddling with a CAR-15 (they are a lot easier to pack along than an M-16, and a lot easier to spray the target with than a Remington 870 shotgun), or swinging through the window of a foreign embassy with the SAS and cutting down some of Khomeini's and Khadaffi's boys with an Ingram Mac-10.

Please don't put any ninjas in your magazine; they have already been overrated enough without you doing it. I think if any soldier met up with a ninja, he would simply blow him away.

How about some stories about the SAS or Delta Force, or stories taking place inside Central America?

Now I have a disagreement concerning issue #6. I don't believe a Hind Mi-24 could be brought down by an amateur firing an M-16, with or without an armored panel. Now if the guy had an RPG-7, a LAW, or another type of grenade launcher . . .

Kevin Black
East Prairie, MO

P.S. Since The Punisher isn't in any regular comic at the moment, could we see him in this one? And don't forget what I said about the SAS, they're badder than ninjas. Oh year, almost forgot, no more dead cops, that turns my stomach.

Dear Savage Tales,

I am one of your fans. I just like *all* of the artwork. I started reading your magazine two weeks ago, and I think it's the best thing in the stores. It has *action*. I've been waiting a long time for a magazine like this. And now I've got it. Every time I go to town, , I go see if there are any new SAVAGE TALES . . . sometimes I have to wait another day. It's hard to wait

Keep sending 'em out to the stores.

Rick Ramos

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

SAVAGE TALES

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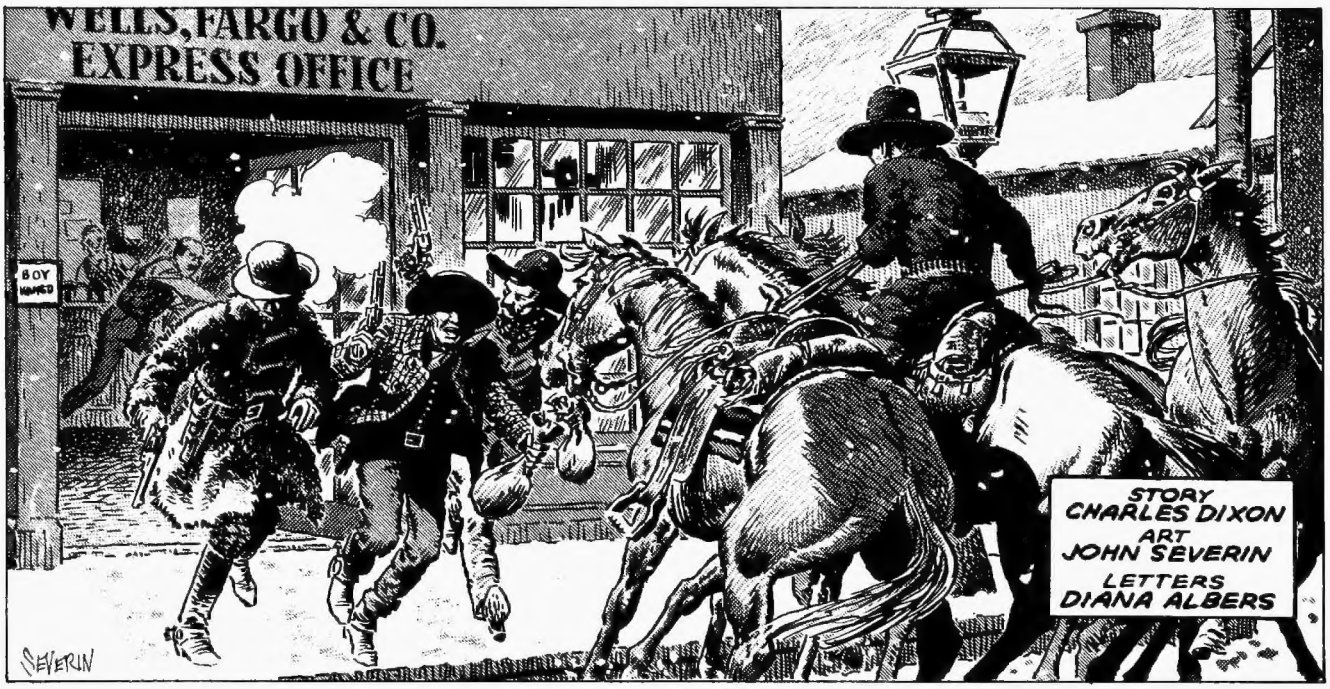
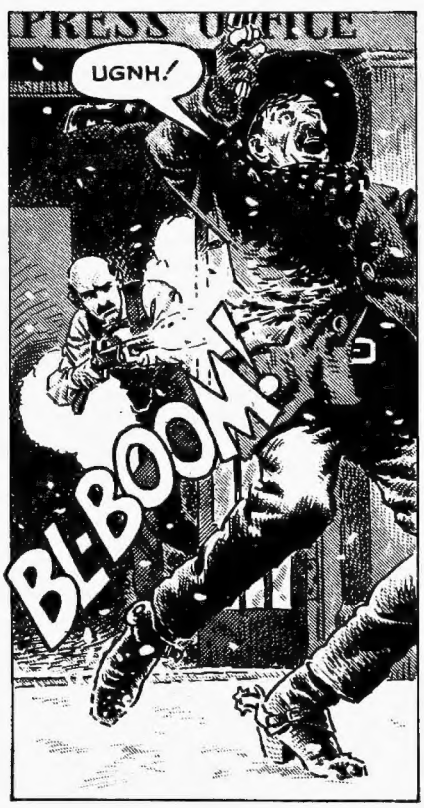
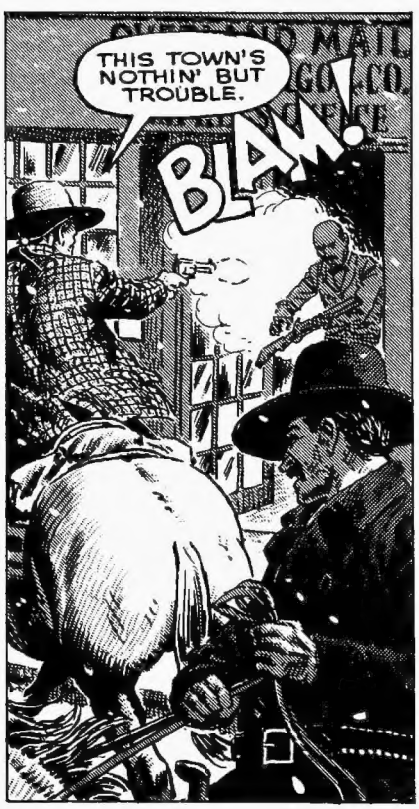
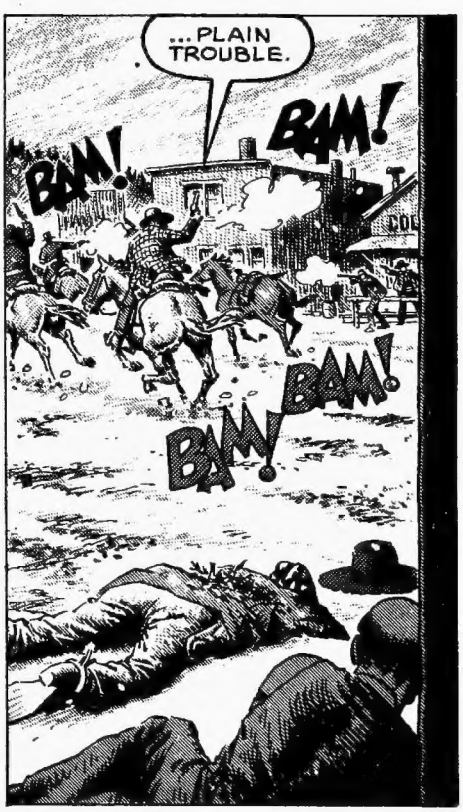
THE LONG RIDE HOME

THE TOWN OF LEHIGH, MONTANA. MARCH, 1883.









SEVERAL HOURS LATER.
I'M PLAIN SORRY, LESTER...
S'O.K. I BEEN RUNNIN' ON HARD LUCK SINCE THE FARM WENT BUST ...KOF./ KOF./
IT AIN'T NEVER GONNA STOP SNOWING.
CLOVUS...
LESTER'S DEAD.
CAN'T BURY HIM... THE GROUND'S FROZE.
THIS MONEY IS TO BUY LESTER A GOOD BURYING. HE MAY HAVE DIED BAD BUT TIMES FORCED HIM TO IT.
THINK THEY'LL CATCH US?
NO WAY!

NO DOLLAR-A-DAY POSSE IS GONNA FOLLOW US THROUGH THIS. WE'LL HEAD UP TO CANADA FOR A WHILE.
WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO STOP REAL SOON. THE HORSES IS TIRED.
A LITTLE FURTHER.
CLOVUS! WHAT'S THAT UP AHEAD?
A LIGHT. HERE'S WHERE WE STOP.
NOW THAT'S A WELCOME SIGHT.
YOU DON'T NEED THAT, BEAU.
KLING-A-KLING!
JUST BEING CAREFUL.
YES? WHO'S THERE?

HIDEE MA'AM. SAW YOUR LIGHT OUT THERE.
COME IN. COME IN. YOU MEN MUST BE FROZE THROUGH.
THAT'S GRANNY. SHE'S DEAF. I'LL FIX YOU MEN A HOT MEAL. YOU MUST BE STARVED.
THANK YOU KINDLY, MA'AM. AIN'T THERE NOBODY ELSE HOME?
MY DADDY ISN'T HERE. JUST ME AND GRANNY TILL DADDY GETS HOME. DINNER'S READY.
I DON'T THINK BEAU WILL BE JOINING US. IT'S BEEN A TIRING DAY.
IT'LL JUST BE ME AND YOU FOR DINNER, MA'AM.
YES. I S'POSE...

NEXT MORNING.
CLOVUS!
DAGNABBIT, CLOVUS! GET UP! WE'RE BACK IN LEHIGH!
HUH?
BALLS AFIRE!
WE MUSTA' GOT TURNED AROUND IN THE SNOW. WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?
WE'RE GONNA GET OUR BUTTS OUTTA HERE! THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO!
WHERE'S OUR HORSES? THEY AIN'T OUT FRONT.
THEY'RE IN THE STABLE ACROSS THE WAY.
COME ON, CLOVUS. NO TIME FOR THAT!

SHUT UP, BEAU. WE LED THAT POSSE A CHASE. THEY AIN'T NO-WHERES NEAR HERE.

THERE'S NO END TO OUR HARD LUCK.

BLAM!

BLAM! BLAM!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

KRAK!

BLAM!

BLAM!

UGNH!

BLAM!

COME ON, BEAU. AIN'T MUCH FURTHER.

CLOVUS!

KRAK!

KRAK!

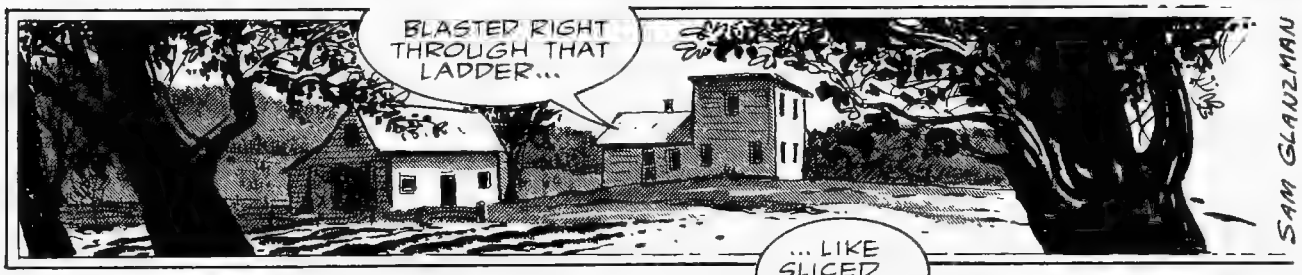
KRAK!

KRAK!

MOVE YOUR LAZY BUTT, BOY! ONCE WE'RE ON OUR HORSES, WE'RE GONE!
BLAM!
BLAM!
KRAK!
BLAM!
KRAK!
KRAK!
BLAM!
JUST A LITTLE...GASP!...MORE, BOY!
KRAK!
KRAK!
BL-BLAM!
CREEEEEK!
BLA-
BOOM!

...HARD LUCK IS... OVER... BEAU.
PLAIN STUPID TO COME BACK HERE LIKE THAT.
MUSTA GOT LOST.
DADDY!
DADDY! YOU'RE HOME!
END

OF WAR AND PEACE • TALES BY MAS



YEAH! LIKE BALONEY...
... LIKE SLICED BALONEY!
RESCUED BY LUCK
A THUNDER-BLAST. THE DESTROYER STRONG, TORPEDOED, STAGGERED OUT OF COLUMN...
OFTEN DESCRIBED AS A LADDER, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS EXTEND NORTHWESTWARD TO THE BISMARKS. RABAUL, THE JAPANESE CITADEL WAS THE "TOP RUNG." IT COULD ONLY BE CRUSHED BY A LARGE SCALE OFFENSIVE.

AT THAT TIME... EARLY IN 1942 ... THE U.S. HAD NEITHER THE SHIPS OR MEN AVAILABLE FOR SUCH AN OFFENSIVE. UNABLE TO STRIKE DIRECTLY AT **RABAUL**, THE AMERICANS BEGAN "CLIMBING THE LADDER." **GUADALCANAL** WAS THE FIRST "RUNG." NEXT UP WAS **NEW GEORGIA ISLAND**.

JULY 5, 1943 ... UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS A U.S. ARMY CONVOY OF NINE SHIPS SCREENED BY FOUR DESTROYERS, QUIETLY APPROACHED **RICE ANCHORAGE** ...

SUPPORTING THIS UNIT WAS A BOMBARDMENT GROUP OF THREE CRUISERS AND FOUR DESTROYERS UNDER REAR ADMIRAL AINSWORTH.

KULA GULF

NEW GEO

SOLOMON ISLANDS

New Georgia

Guadalcanal

Rice Anchorage

Enogai

Bairoko

Arundel Island

WELL INSIDE THE **KULA GULF**, THE BOMBARDMENT GROUP BEGAN HURLING SHELLS AT THE ENEMY SHORE.

BREAKING OFF THE BOMBARDMENT, ADMIRAL AINSWORTH'S GROUP SWEPT NORTH IN PURSUIT ...

AT 0031, A SCREENING DESTROYER'S RADAR "PIP" SHOWED TWO VESSELS FLEEING N/W OUT OF THE GULF.

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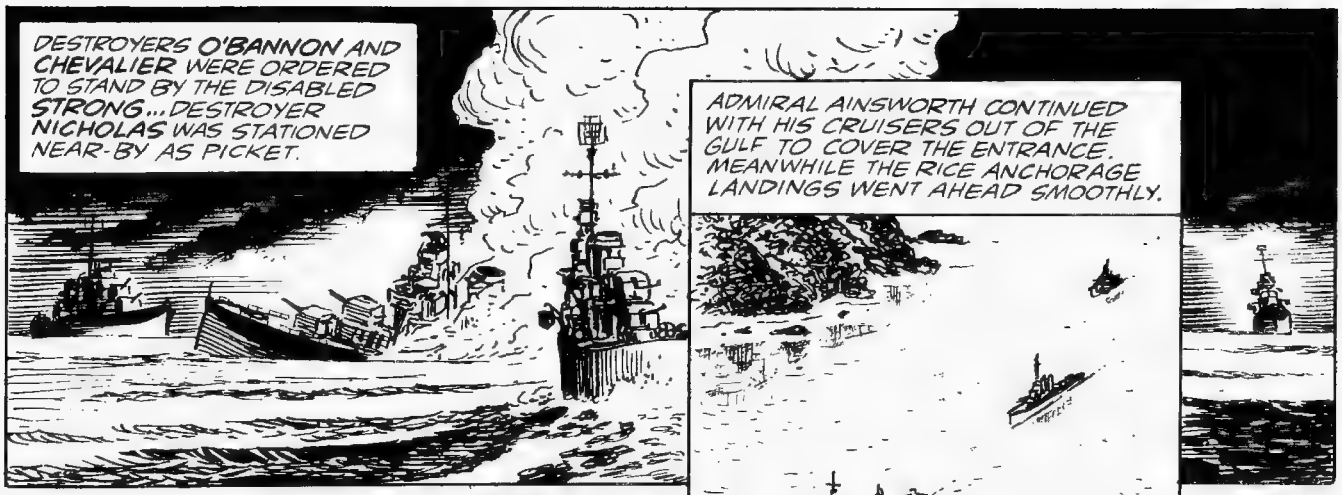
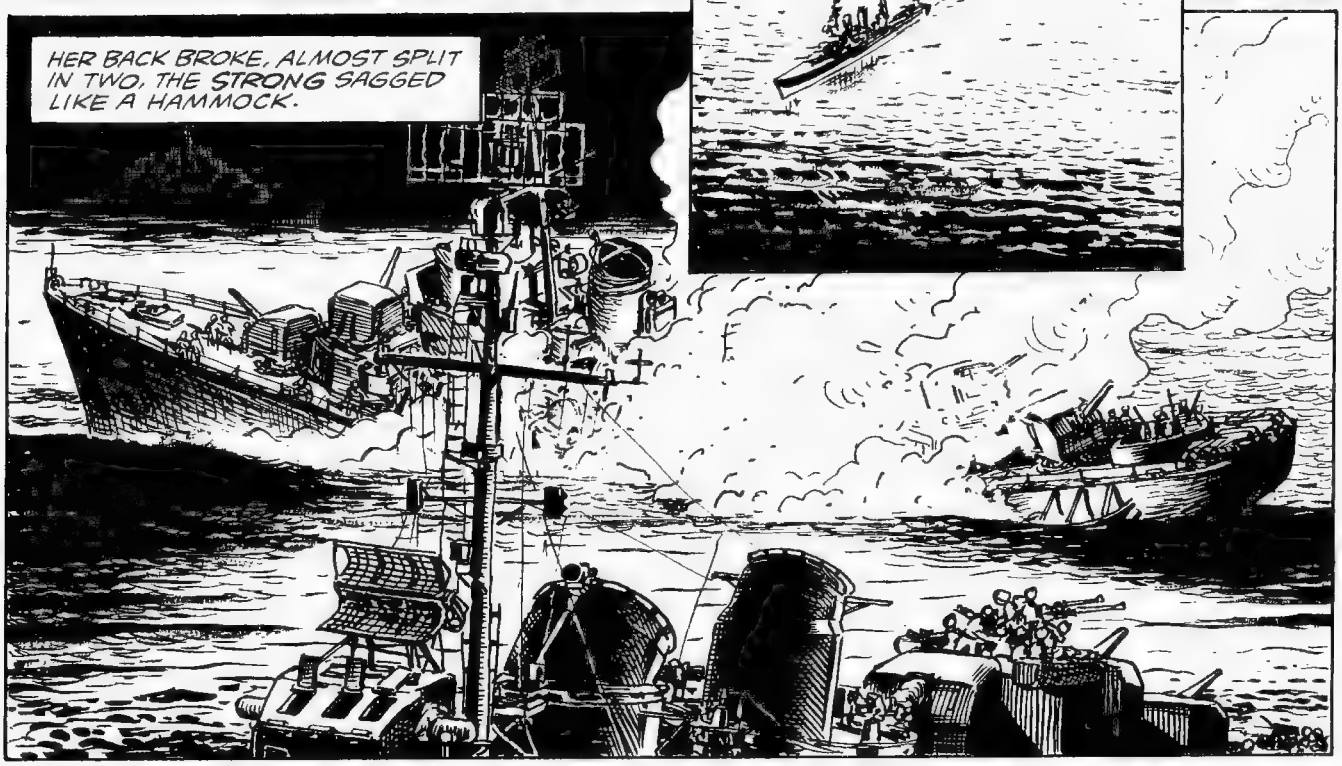
... WHEN SUDDENLY ... TWO MILES OFF RICE ANCHORAGE ... A THUNDER-BLAST. THE DESTROYER **STRONG**, TORPEDOED, STAGGERED OUT OF COLUMN, MORTALLY HURT.


DESTROYERS O'BANNON AND CHEVALIER WERE ORDERED TO STAND BY THE DISABLED STRONG... DESTROYER NICHOLAS WAS STATIONED NEAR-BY AS PICKET.
ADMIRAL AINSWORTH CONTINUED WITH HIS CRUISERS OUT OF THE GULF TO COVER THE ENTRANCE. MEANWHILE THE RICE ANCHORAGE LANDINGS WENT AHEAD SMOOTHLY.

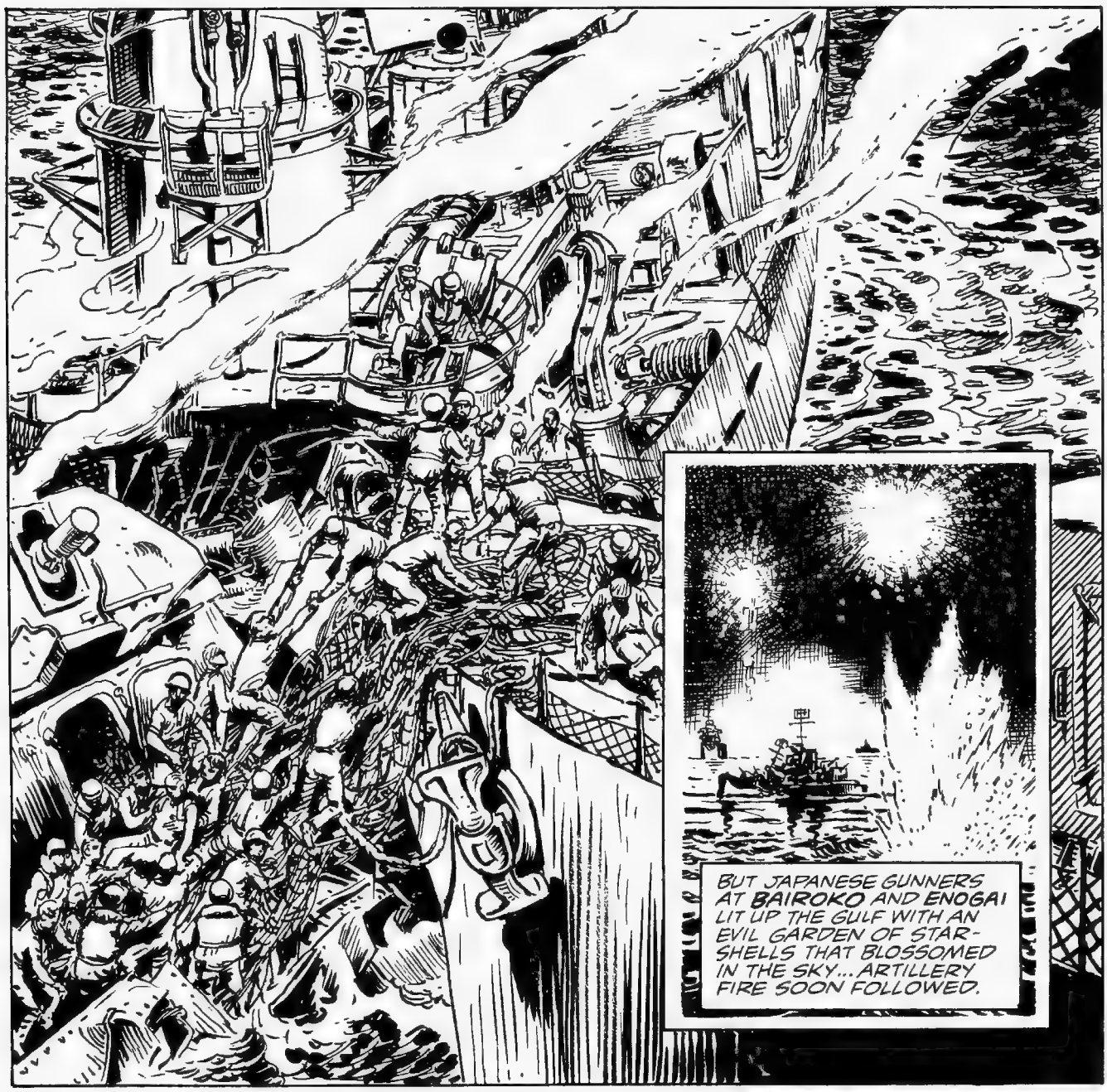


HER FORWARD FIREROOM WAS WIPED OUT FROM PORT TO STAR-BOARD... WATER POURED INTO HER ENGINEERING SPACES.

BELOW DECKS MEN FOUGHT THEIR WAY TOP-SIDE, UNCARING FOR THE DEAD SWIRLING THROUGH FLOODING COMPARTMENTS.

THE SEA WAS RUNNING FLAT, ALLOWING THE **CHEVALIER** TO NUZZLE UP TO THE DYING SHIP AND THRUST HER BOW INTO THE WRECKAGE.

ACROSS THIS BRIDGE OF CABLES AND HEMP, THE BADLY WOUNDED WERE HANDED OVER. OTHER SURVIVORS CRAWLED TO SAFETY... ALL MAY HAVE MADE IT.


BUT JAPANESE GUNNERS AT **BAIROKO** AND **ENOGAI** LIT UP THE GULF WITH AN EVIL GARDEN OF STAR-SHELLS THAT BLOSSOMED IN THE SKY... ARTILLERY FIRE SOON FOLLOWED.

AS O'BANNON'S GUNNERS ANSWERED BACK THE CHEVALIER RUSHED RESCUE EFFORTS.
SOME 240 OF STRONG'S CREW SCRAMBLED ON BOARD THE CHEVALIER. BUT UNABLE TO RISK RESCUE OPERATIONS ANY LONGER SHE BACKED CLEAR... JUST AS TWO SHELLS SMASHED INTO STRONG, RAVAGING THE SHIP.
A FEW MEN STILL ON THE STRONG SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET OVER HER SIDE.
AT 0122 THE BATTERED STRONG WENT DOWN... SEVERAL 300 LB. DEPTH CHARGES EXPLODED, KILLING AND MAIMING SWIMMERS.
UNABLE TO SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS IN THE DARKNESS, O'BANNON, NICHOLAS AND CHEVALIER RETIRED UP THE GULF... PURSUED BY ENEMY SALVOS FROM THE ISLAND.

IN THE BLIND DARKNESS...UNSEEN...SOME 23 MEN CLUSTERED TOGETHER WERE CARRIED SOUTH BY THE CURRENT. AMONG THEM WAS LT. HUGH B. MILLER, U.S.N.R., BADLY HURT BY THE DEPTH CHARGE BLAST.
MORNING FOUND THE GROUP DRIFTING IN AN EMPTY WORLD OF GULF AND SKY.
ONE AFTER ANOTHER LOST HIS HOLD, UNABLE TO CLING TO THE PIECES OF FLOTSAM...
...UNABLE TO CLING TO LIFE...
...ONE AFTER ANOTHER...
...SLIPPED INTO ETERNITY.
FOUR DAYS LATER WHEN THE FLOTSOM DRIFTED ASHORE ON ARUNDEL ISLAND, ONLY SIX OF THE TWENTY-THREE WERE LEFT.
...TWO DIED CRAWLING ASHORE.

FOR FIVE DAYS LT. MILLER AND THREE SEAMEN STRUGGLED THROUGH THE STEAMING COASTAL JUNGLE.
ON JULY 14 A SEVERE HEMORRHAGE CONVINCED MILLER HE WAS DYING.
EXHAUSTED, HE FELL TO THE GROUND. ORDERING THE SEAMEN ON, HE GAVE WHAT HE HAD... SHOES... AND OTHER ARTICLES OF CLOTHING.
LEAVE ME... KEEP ON... TRY TO REACH FRIENDLY TERRITORY...
...STICK TO THE SHORE-LINE... YOU MAY GET LOST IN THE JUNGLE...
THOUGH RELUCTANT TO LEAVE LT. MILLER, THE MEN WENT ON... ORDERS WERE ORDERS.

FOR DAYS HE LAY IN A SEMI-COMATOSE STATE ...
...ON THE 17TH A DOWNPOUR BATHED AND--
--REVIVED HIM.
BY THE 18TH/19TH, HIS ARMS, FACE AND BODY WERE BLOODIED AND TORN BY PALM THATCH AND VINES... HIS SHOULDERS BLISTERED BY THE SUN.
HE CRAWLED, ROSE, STUMBLED, STOOD...
...AND CONTINUED ON.
BUT THE TASTE OF BLOOD WAS NO LONGER IN HIS MOUTH... SOMEHOW THE HEMORRHAGING HAD STOPPED.

A COCONUT PROVIDED HIM WITH THE FIRST SUBSTANTIAL FOOD HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO SWALLOW IN TWO WEEKS.
SPOTTING AN OLD JAPANESE BLANKET IN THE UNDERBRUSH, LT. MILLER SCOUTED THE JUNGLE ON THE ALERT.
FURTHER INLAND HE FOUND A DEAD JAPANESE INFANTRYMAN, COMPLETE WITH UNIFORM, RATIONS AND WEAPONS.
CLOTHED, ARMED AND WITH SOLID FOOD LT. MILLER CONTINUED ON...
...WITH RENEWED SPIRITS.

ON AUGUST 5TH HE SIGHTED AND AMBUSHED AN ENEMY PATROL COMING DOWN THE BEACH...
...AND KILLED ALL FIVE WITH A VOLLEY OF GRENADES.
WITH MORE WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS FOR SURVIVAL HE BUILT A LEAN-TO IN THE JUNGLE.
FROM HIS SOLITARY BASE HE STAGED A SERIES OF FORAYS, WAGING A ONE-MAN WAR AGAINST THE ENEMY OCCUPANTS.
SINGLED HANDED HE KILLED ABOUT 30... OBTAINED A DOSSIER OF VALUABLE MILITARY INFORMATION, LOST 40 LBS AND ACQUIRED THE LOOK OF A WOLF.
AFTER 43 DAYS ON THE ISLAND HE WAS PICKED UP BY LUCK,* FLOWN TO A HOSPITAL IN NOUMEA, RECOMMENDED FOR THE NAVY CROSS AND PERSONALLY VISITED BY ADMIRAL HALSEY.

*MAJOR GOODWIN R. LUCK, U.S.M.C.R. FLYING OVER THE ARUNDEL BEACH IN A SEAPLANE SPOTTED AND RESCUED LT. MILLER...THIS TRUE STORY IS AUTHENTICATED BY THE U.S.N. BUPERS.

DEAD RINGER
BORN 2 RAISE HELL
ONLY THE BEST KNIVES FOR YOU, BILLY.
WE WANT TO KEEP YOU HAPPY.
DOING HITS FOR YOU IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE, EDDY, BUT I CAN'T STAY IN TOWN.
THAT BONDSMAN, HE'LL BE LOOKING FOR ME SOON.
RELAX.
NOW THAT YOU'RE OUT OF THE SLAMMER MAKING YOU DISAPPEAR WILL BE A CINCH.

HEY, AIN'T THAT PETE CASEY, LITTLE EDDY'S RIGHT HAND MAN?
YEAH. LOOKS LIKE EDDY DISSOLVED THE PARTNERSHIP.
WELL, NOW WE KNOW WHERE CASEY'S BEEN THE PAST TWO WEEKS. CARL, IS THAT A GASH ON HIS THROAT?
YEAH, PHEW!
THEN MY TIP WAS RIGHT, THE BLADE'S WORKIN' FOR LITTLE EDDY. BANE, THIS GUY'S AN ANIMAL!
ALL I KNOW IS, RICHETTI WANTS THIS ONE DEAD!
LIEUTENANT GRILLO, THE BOY JUST SHOWED UP.
OKAY, KID, YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT CASEY. NOW WHERE'S HIS KILLER?
WHAT?!
LISTEN, IF YOU KNOW WHERE BILLY THE BLADE IS—
HANDS OFF!
THIS BOY IS UNDER POLICE PROTECTION, AND HE IS HERE IN THE INTEREST OF JUSTICE, NOT MONEY!
GOOD FOR HIM.

NEXT DAY...
YOU SURE COME UP WITH GOOD IDEAS, BOSS.
IT'S BEEN TWO WEEKS AND THE COPS STILL AIN'T TRACKED BILLY.
AND THEY WON'T, NOT NOW, NOT EVER!
WHAT'S THIS?
WHY YOU CRYIN', HONEY?
MY RABBIT'S STUCK UNDER THAT CAR!
IS THAT ALL? WHY, I'LL GET YOUR RABBIT FOR YOU, OKAY?
Y'KNOW, LITTLE GIRL, EDDY WAS ALWAYS A PUSHOVER FOR KIDS.
PROB'LY 'CAUSE THEY'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE SHORTER 'N HIM.
I HEARD THAT, YOU PEA-BRAINED ... GOON!
OH, N-N-NO, N-N-NOT Y-Y-YOU!
I'M SORRY, EDDY, I CAN'T HEAR YOU. YOU'LL HAVE TO RAISE YOUR VOICE!
HERE, LET ME HELP YOU. NOW SING ME A SONG, EDDY.--
A SONG ABOUT BILLY THE BLADE!

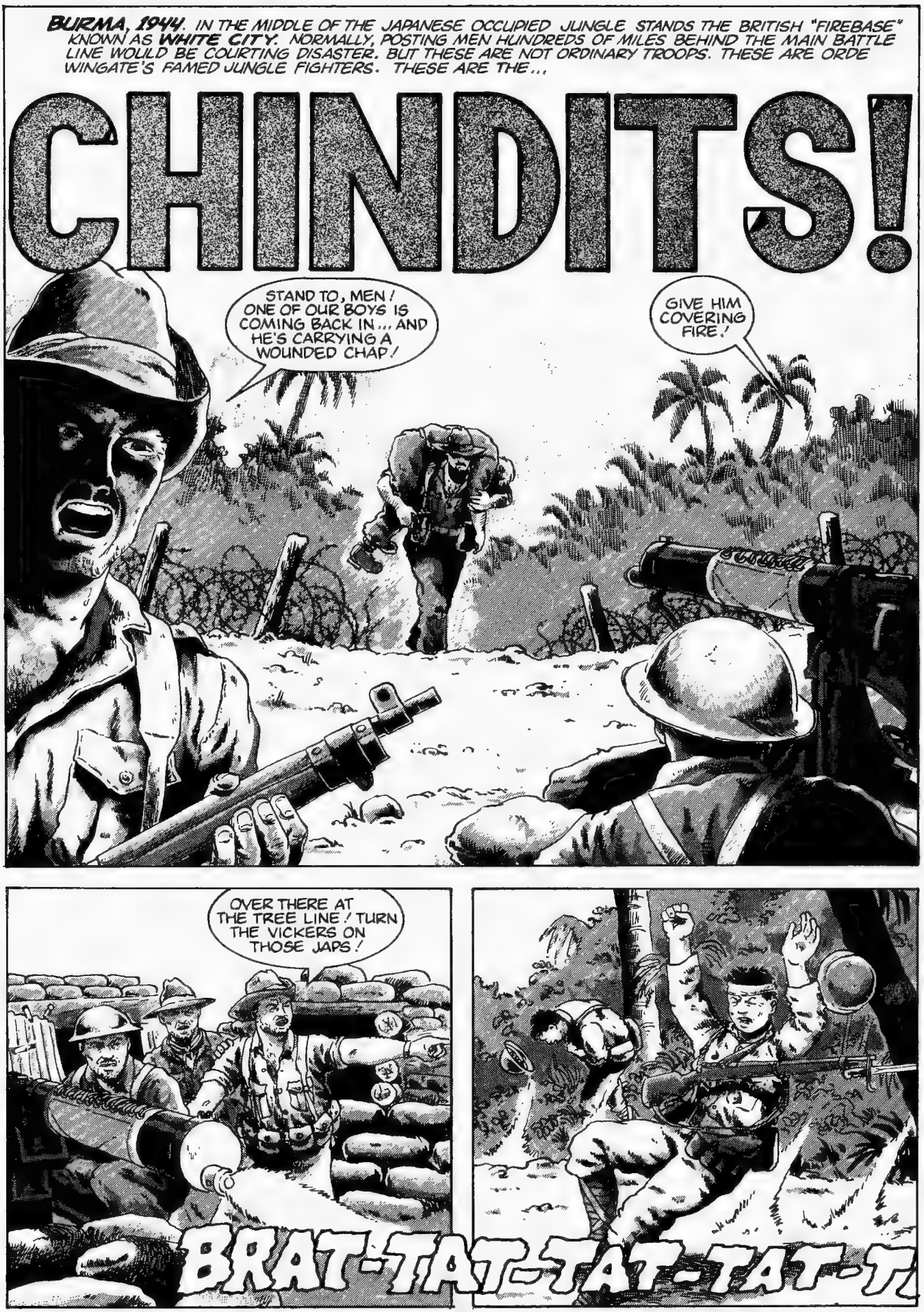
A LITTLE LATER...
SILVER'S
LOOKS LIKE THE PARTY STARTED WITHOUT US.
UNIT FOUR, TAKE THREE MEN AND TRY TO FIND A ROOF ENTRANCE.
YOU ADOPTED THAT BOY, GRILLO.?
LAUGH ALL YOU WANT BANE. WE'VE GOT OUR MAN SURROUNDED. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME, NOW.
HAVEN'T YOU READ THIS GUY'S FILE? GIVE HIM TIME, AND HE'LL RUN!
WE'RE GOIN' IN!
FORGET IT! THIS IS NOT A JOB FOR AMATEURS.
I CAN SEE THAT!

LOUSY PIGS! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU GOT ON ME, OR HOW YOU FOUND ME, OR HOW YOU CAN RECOGNIZE ME--
BUT I DO KNOW THAT I AIN'T SPENDIN' NO TIME IN THE PEN.!
FIRE
OH, NO YOU DON'T.!
YOU'D BETTER GO BACK OUT, YOU CLUMSY SNEAKS, OR I'LL BLOW THIS LA-
YAAAAA!
DON'T BOTHER SAYING YOUR PRAYERS, BILLY, YOU WON'T HAVE THE TIME.

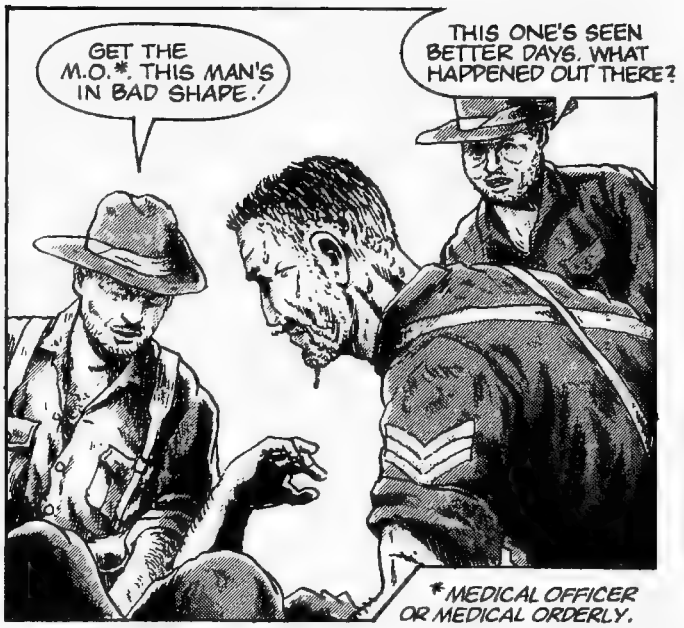
BILLY? OH, NO MAN. THIS IS SOME KINDA SET UP. DON'T SHOOT, MAN, I GOTTA SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
DON'T SHOOT. IT'S HERE IN MY POCKET.
FIRE!
IS HE DEAD?
IF HE ISN'T, HE NEVER WILL BE.
WELL, BANE, I GUESS THIS REALLY IS YOUR COLLAR!
NU-FACE
"LOSE YOUR ENEMIES OVERNIGHT"
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
noon to midnight
77 Delancey St.
NONSENSE, LIEUTENANT, HE'S ALL YOURS. I'M PRETTY INTERESTED IN JUSTICE MYSELF.

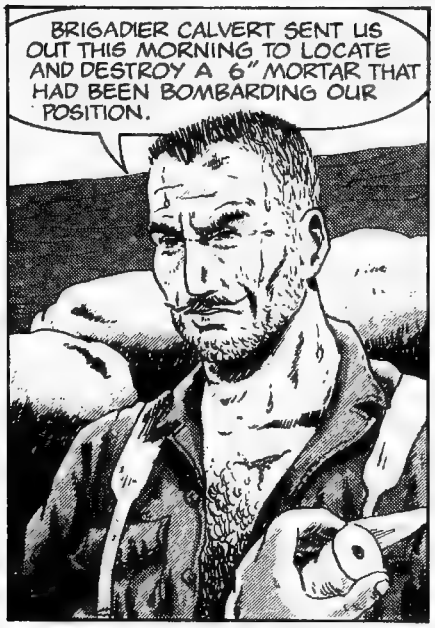
YOU KNOW, KID, I GO OUT ON A LIMB WHEN I DO A SPECIAL JOB LIKE I DONE FOR YOU. FACE SWITCHES ARE ALWAYS RISKY.
AHHH!
AND THAT GUY I GAVE YOUR FACE TO, WELL, I HEAR HE GOT KILLED..
... FOR YOUR CRIMES, NOT HIS.
SO I FIGURE, IF YOU WANT ME TO KEEP QUIET, I BETTER SEE A LITTLE BONUS.
YEAH, THAT'S WHY I FIGURED YOU CALLED ME HERE...
SO HERE'S YOUR BONUS!
TOO BAD, POPS, YOU DID SUCH A GOOD JOB ON MY FACE!
BUT HE OVERLOOKED YOUR ARM. NICE TATTOO, BILLY!

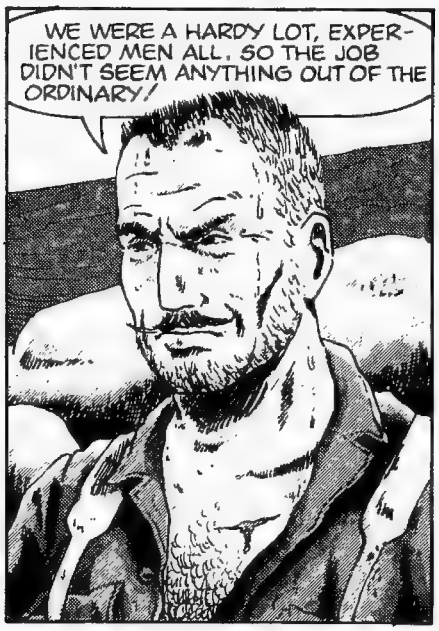
GUN OR NO GUN, YOU WON'T TAKE ME IN.
NO. NOT ALL OF YOU.
YES, YES, WELL, YOU CAN'T WIN 'EM ALL. I'LL BE SURE TO SEND HIS FILE OVER.
I GATHER FROM WHAT LT. GRILLO JUST TOLD ME, THINGS DID NOT GO WELL.
BANE? WHY YES, A VERY JUST MAN. ALL RIGHT.. GOOD BYE.
LET'S SEE WHAT HE SAYS WHEN HE TRIES TO MAKE A POSI-TIVE I.D.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
GRILLO MAY HAVE THE BLADE'S FACE--
BUT WE'VE GOT THE FINGERPRINTS!


BURMA, 1944. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPIED JUNGLE STANDS THE BRITISH "FIREBASE" KNOWN AS WHITE CITY. NORMALLY, POSTING MEN HUNDREDS OF MILES BEHIND THE MAIN BATTLE LINE WOULD BE COURTING DISASTER. BUT THESE ARE NOT ORDINARY TROOPS. THESE ARE ORDE WINGATE'S FAMED JUNGLE FIGHTERS. THESE ARE THE...
CHINDITS!
STAND TO, MEN! ONE OF OUR BOYS IS COMING BACK IN... AND HE'S CARRYING A WOUNDED CHAP!
GIVE HIM COVERING FIRE!
OVER THERE AT THE TREE LINE! TURN THE VICKERS ON THOSE JAPS!
BRAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-T

HE MADE IT.!
LET'S GIVE HIM A HAND, MEN.!


GET THE M.O.*. THIS MAN'S IN BAD SHAPE.!
THIS ONE'S SEEN BETTER DAYS. WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE?
*MEDICAL OFFICER OR MEDICAL ORDERLY.


BRIGADIER CALVERT SENT US OUT THIS MORNING TO LOCATE AND DESTROY A 6" MORTAR THAT HAD BEEN BOMBARDING OUR POSITION.


WE WERE A HARDY LOT, EXPERIENCED MEN ALL. SO THE JOB DIDN'T SEEM ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY!

FINDING THE MORTAR AND KNOCKING IT OUT WAS ONE THING... GETTING BACK WAS ANOTHER.

"WE FOUND IT JUST BEFORE DAWN AND MOVED RIGHT INTO POSITION. FIRST WE TOOK OUT THE SENTRIES...
THONK

"THEN WE HIT 'EM WITH EVERYTHING WE HAD!
POW
POW
BUDDA!
POW! POW!
KRAW!
BNEEE
VIP!
ZING!
ZIP
KRAW!
POW!
POW
BUDDA!
BUDDA!
krak
OI DONE FOR THIS BUNCH, TUCK. PUT A MILLS BOMB DOWN THE TUBE!
BUDDA
BUDDA
THIS IS ONE MORTAR THAT WON'T GIVE US NO MORE BLOODY TROUBLE!
PING!
KER-BLAM
GOOD WORK, MEN! WAS ANYONE HIT?
SMYTHER GOT A SLUG IN THE THIGH.

IT'S NOT BAD, LT. OXLEY. OI CAN MAKE IT BACK ON MY OWN POWER, SIR.
NO, LIEUTENANT. OI CAN MAKE IT. YOU KNOW HOW THE JAPS FEEL ABOUT US THAT SURRENDER! JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE!
SMYTHER, YOU KNOW CHINDIT PROCEDURE. A WOUNDED MAN CAN SLOW US DOWN AND PUT US ALL IN JEAPORDY. WE ALWAYS LEAVE THE WOUNDED BEHIND TO SURRENDER!
OUT OF THE QUESTION, SMYTHER!
THAT LT. OXLEY IS A REAL SWINE.
OI DON'T LIKE HIM ANY MORE THAN YOU DO, TUCK. BUT IN THE CHINDITS WE'VE ALWAYS LEFT OUR WOUNDED BEHIND.
OI WAS IN THE RETREAT FROM BURMA AND IN THE FIRST CHINDIT RAID. OI'VE SEEN MANY A GOOD MATE LEFT WITH A WATER BOTTLE, A PISTOL, AND A GRENADE. IT'S NOT AN EASY THING TO SEE.
IF OI EVER GET HIT OI HOPE IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT OI WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT.
"WE MOVED FAST, CUTTING A PATH TO WHITE CITY. HOW WERE WE TO KNOW THAT THE JAPANESE HAD DETECTED US AND HAD SET UP A TRAP.
TAKKA TAKKA
VIP VIP VIP VIP
TAKKA TAKKA TAKK

"AFTER THE INITIAL SHOCK OF THE AMBUSH, WE RECOVERED OUR SENSES AND WENT AFTER THE GUNS THAT HAD US PINNED DOWN.
TAKKA
TAKKA
TAKKA
TAKKA
PING!
Ping
WHAM
MORE OF 'EM! WE BETTER GET OUTTA... AAAGGH!
RAK!
ZING
LOOK OUT, CREAGH!
THANKS, TUCK.
POW!
UUURRGGHH!
BEEEOOO
DISENGAGE AND SCATTER! MAKE IT BACK AS BEST YOU CAN!

GOD! OI'M OUTTA AMMO!
SO AM OI. YOU HEARD THE MAN, TUCK! LET'S GET THE 'ELL OUTTA HERE!
WHAT THE....!??
LOOK OUT!
OOOOFFF!
THUNK!
CREAGH!
TUCK! I'LL TAKE CARE OF ....!!

THE 'ELL YOU ARE!
SNAP!
'OW ARE YA, TUCK OLD BOY?
HE NAILED ME GOOD, CREAGH. OI'M BLOODY DONE.
NAW. NAW. OI DON'T WANNA 'EAR ANY AH THAT.
AAAGG.' IT HURTS, CREAGH. JUST LEAVE ME. SAVE YER SELF.
SHUT UP TUCK. OI OUT RANK YA.
uuuggghhh...
BLIMEY! LOOKS LIKE ME UNCLE OTTO'S BUTCHER SHOP.
WELL, IF IT ISN'T LT. OXLEY.
uugh... SERGEANT CREAGH. HELP ME.
DON'T LEAVE ME, SERGEANT. GIVE ME A HAND.
SORRY, LIEUTENANT, SIR. THAT'S AGAINST CHINDIT PROCEDURE.

HAVE MERCY, SERGEANT...
SORRY, LIEUTENANT. OI'M CARRYIN' MY LEGAL LIMIT NOW.

"ENEMY PATROLS WERE OUT EVERYWHERE, BUT IT WAS EASY AVOIDING THEM. TUCK COOPERATED BY STAYING EXTRA QUIET.

I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU, SERGEANT. YOUR FRIEND IS DEAD... HAS BEEN FOR SOMETIME.
OI KNOW, SIR. OI KNOW.

YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE TO TAKE BACK A DEAD MAN? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
OI'VE BEEN AT THIS A LONG TIME, CAPTAIN...

OI SEEN A LOT OF GOOD MEN LEFT BEHIND IN THIS GREEN 'ELL. LEFT TO THE MERCY OF THE ENEMY, TO THE JUNGLE BEAST OR JUST TO ROT. SOMETIMES OI HARDLY KNEW 'EM. SOMETIMES THEY WAS GOOD FRIENDS.
OI STILL SEE 'EM, CAPTAIN. OI SEE 'EM IN MY SLEEP. BUT THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT. OI'VE LOST ANOTHER FRIEND, AND THAT'S HARD ENOUGH TO TAKE...

...BUT AT LEAST THIS TIME OI GOT SOMETHING TO BURY.
The End

IT'S SO HOT IN HOUSTON IN AUGUST THAT YOU JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE MOVING AROUND MUCH. UNLESS YOU'RE THE KIND THE HEAT MAKES CRAZY... UNLESS YOU'RE...
MOVE YOUR TAIL, JES, WE AIN'T GOT ALL DAY!
...THE KILLING KIND.

HOLD YER WATER, CLETE... I GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS HERE!

PLEASE... DON'T... I'VE GOT A... FAMILY...

LUCKY BOY. YOU'VE GOT SOMEONE TO GRIEVE OVER YOU!

PUNCH IT, BABY!
SEREEE
I GUESS WITH INSURANCE THAT GUARD'S WORTH MORE TO HIS FAMILY DEAD THAN ALIVE!
SURE, JES.
SCREW 'IM! JOLENE, GET US OUT IN TH' STICKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
LATER THAT DAY...
CAN'T WE STOP FOR A CHEESE-BURGER?
SHUT UP, BOOGER! WE GOT TROUBLE!
PULL OVER, JO... I'LL HANDLE THIS PECKER-WOOD!
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, OFFICER?
NO TROUBLE.

WHAT THE HEY?!
EEEE

BLAM! BLAM!
PATROL
CLETE! YOU AND BOOGER DRIVE THIS HERE COP CAR. ME'N TH' SHERIFF'LL RIDE WITH JO!
P.TATUM
THAT SUIT YOU, MISTER?
SUITS ME JUST FINE.
TATUM
THEM COPS CALLED YOU LOUIS. GUESS THEY KNOWED YA.
MUST HAVE.
WHADDAYA MEAN "MUST HAVE!"?
WELL, THEY MUSTA KNOWED ME. I DIDN'T KNOW THEM FELLERS!

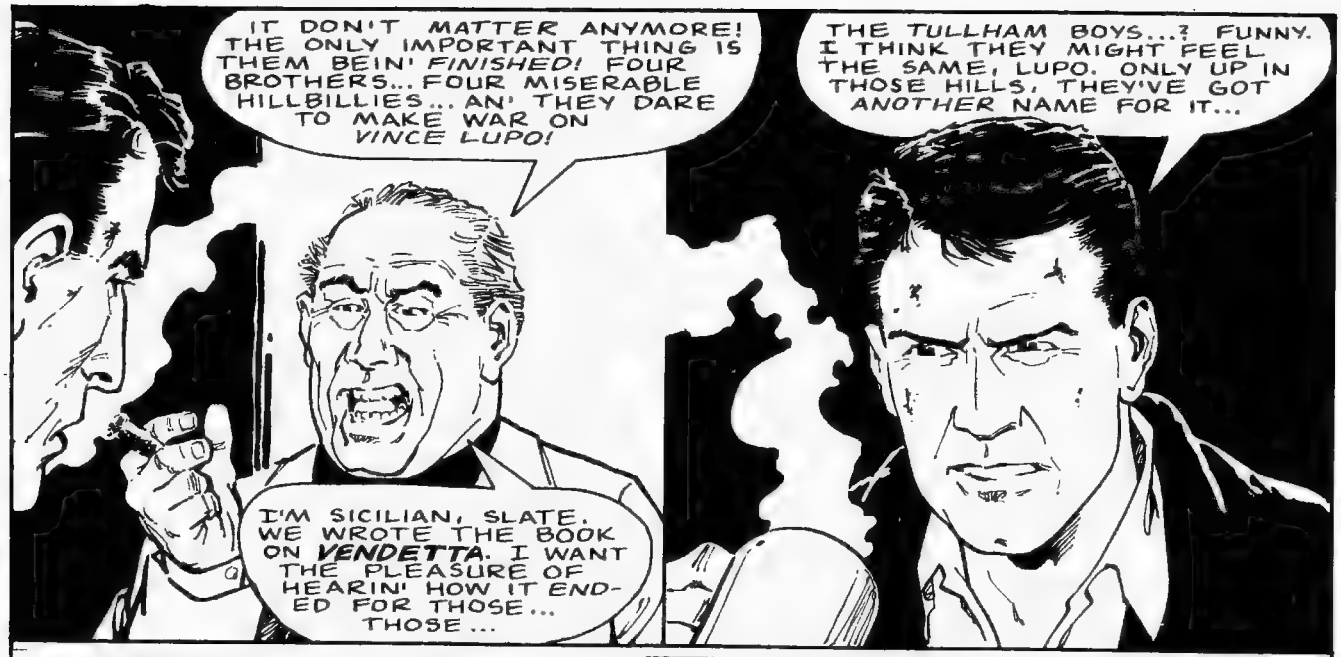
TOWARD MIDNIGHT...
WE'RE HERE.
BOOGER, TAKE THE LAW MAN IN THE HOUSE AND ENTERTAIN HIM.
NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT THE SHERIFF'S GOT IN HIS TRUNK.
MAYBE ONE OF THEM NICE COP COATS. I'M GETTIN' COLD!
JUMPIN' JEHOSOPHAT!
A DEAD MAN... OH NO.
AAAAGGGHHHH!
WHAT THE BLAZES?!
SOUNDS LIKE IT'S BOOGER YELLIN', BACK AT THE HOUSE...

BOOGER? THAT YOU?
NO, MA'AM. IT'S ME.
BA-BOOM!
AGKK!!
DEPAR OF P SAFE
HIGHWAY
BOOM
YAAGH!
BLAM!
HEY... KOFF... YOU'RE A COP KOFF... THERE'S MY RIGHTS AN' STUFF... KOFF!
OH, YEAH... YOUR RIGHTS...
YOU'RE GONNA KILL ME?
KLIK-KLAK
SNIK

BABOOM
GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE... HE'S GONNA GET ME!
OH...NO...
OH...NO...
HIDEE, MA'AM. I'M OUT OF BULLETS.
BUT I GOT A JOB TA DO... EVEN IF I DO IT WITH MY BARE HANDS.

LOUIS! LOUIS! LET HER GO! DON'T HURT HER ANYMORE!
JUST LET HER SON. TAKE IT EASY, WE DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
THAT'S IT. YOU RELAX, BOY.
HE'S REAL CRAZY. THEY MUSTA BEEN VACATIONIN'!
FIRST HE GOT BOB TATUM AND TOOK HIS UNIFORM. THEN HE MUSTA COME UP ON THESE FOLKS!
HOUSTON MENTAL HOSPITAL
HOPE THEY PUT HIM INSIDE AN' KEEP 'IM THERE...
...SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE AND DO WHAT HE DONE TO THESE POOR FOLKS.

PROLOGUE: 1930. A ROADHOUSE SOUTH OF SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI.
THE BODYGUARD LOOKED RELIEVED AS HE RECOGNIZED SLATE APPROACHING. HE STARTED TO SPEAK, THEN GOT A GOOD VIEW OF SLATE'S CONDITION AND THE PAIN IN HIS WALK... AND KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT.
YOU'RE ALIVE. THAT'S BETTER THAN ALL THE OTHERS.
BUT I'M NOT PAYIN' YOUR KIND'A RATES FOR BETTER, SLATE. I'M PAYIN' FOR DONE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU GOT, LUPO. AND WHATEVER MY PRICE, YOU GOT IT CHEAP.
GRAB A SEAT. CAN'T OFFER BOOZE. THAT WENT WHEN THEY HIT THE SPEAK AN' GAMBLIN' OPERATION IN BACK.
KITCHEN'S OKAY. WOMAN WHO RUNS IT'S NOT A BAD COOK... HAVE SOME BREAKFAST WITH ME.
ALL I WANT IS, MY MONEY, LUPO... AND TO PUT THE OZARK MOUNTAINS A LONG WAY BEHIND ME. FAST.
THIS AIN'T A STALL SLATE. BUT IF IT'S DONE, I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT. AFTER WHAT THOSE HICKS PUT ME THROUGH, I GOT THAT COMIN' ...CAPISH? BRING THE GENTLEMAN A CUP OF COFFEE, MRS. HOLLIS! LOOKS LIKE HE CAN USE THE LIFT.
FAVORED YOUR RIGHT ARM DRAGGIN' UP THAT CHAIR... TOOK A HIT IN THE LEFT, HUH? ONE OF 'EM SCORED EVEN ON YOU... BEST THERE IS
WELL, YOU CAN AFFORD TO GET PATCHED UP REAL GOOD NOW. ME, THEY GAVE LOSSES THAT CAN'T BE FIXED. THE MEN. THE DOUGH. THE CHANCE TO CORNER KANSAS CITY'S BOOTLEGGIN'...! AN' YOU KNOW WHAT, SLATE--?


IT DON'T MATTER ANYMORE! THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING IS THEM BEIN' FINISHED! FOUR BROTHERS... FOUR MISERABLE HILLBILLIES... AN' THEY DARE TO MAKE WAR ON VINCE LUPO!
I'M SICILIAN, SLATE. WE WROTE THE BOOK ON VENDETTA. I WANT THE PLEASURE OF HEARIN' HOW IT END-ED FOR THOSE... THOSE...
THE TULLHAM BOYS...? FUNNY. I THINK THEY MIGHT FEEL THE SAME, LUPO. ONLY UP IN THOSE HILLS, THEY'VE GOT ANOTHER NAME FOR IT...

FEUD

ARCHIE GOODWIN AND VAL MAYERIK
LETTERS BY DEBORAH KLEIN

BEFORE SLATE, LUPO HAD HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW JACK YALE IN CHARGE. MOST OF SOUTHWEST MISSOURI WAS IN LUPO'S POCKET. BUT THE BIG MONEY WAS IN KANSAS CITY. AND WHEN A FED CRACKDOWN DRIED UP SHIPMENTS OF HOOCH FROM CANADA, VINCE SAW HIS CHANCE.

ALL JACK HAD TO DO WAS BRING A FEW HICKS INTO LINE.

AND WHETHER IT WAS REMINDING A JOPLIN POLICE CHIEF WHOSE PAYROLL HE WAS REALLY ON, OR CONVINCING A SEDALIA TRUCK LINE OWNER TO CARRY OCCASIONAL SPECIAL SHIPMENTS FOR LUPO...
...GETTING PEOPLE IN LINE WAS A JACK YALE SPECIALTY.
Y-YOU'RE THE FELLA... CALLED EVER'BODY TOGETHER OVER AT ARDSVILLE...! SAID WE WAS T'DOUBLE OUR PRODUCTION... YOU'D BUY IT ALL... ONLY AT LOWER PRICES...!
BIG DROUGHT IN KANSAS CITY, POPS. LOTTA THIRSTY CITIZENS. MY BOSS FIGURES YOU MOONSHINERS CAN HELP HIM BECOME THEIR NEW SUPPLIER--
--ONLY YOU GOT FEISTY, POPS, BRAGGIN' THAT NO UPSTATE GREASEBALLS TELL THE TULLHAM FAMILY HOW TO MAKE WHISKEY OR WHAT TO SELL IT FOR.
THINK THIS'LL FIX IT? ... SCARE FOLKS OVER T'YOUR WAY...? YOU DON'T KNOW... MY BOYS...! W-WON'T LET YOU... COME IN AN'...TAKE OVER...!
POPS... WE JUST DID.
TAT! TAT-A-TAT-A-TAT!
BRRAAATT!
THERE MAY HAVE BEEN THOSE WHO RAN SOUR MASH AS GOOD AS EMMETT TULLHAM, BUT FROM JEFF CITY TO LITTLE ROCK, THERE WAS NONE WHO'D CLAIM TO RUN BETTER. WORD OF HIS DEATH TRAVELED FAST AND FAR...
EXACTLY AS JACK YALE INTENDED.
...THESE HORSE AN' BUGGY BACKROADS ALL LOOK ALIKE! SEE IF THE SOLDIER BOY AHEAD KNOWS ANYTHING!

LOOKIN' FOR A PLACE CALLED CEMETERY HILL, SOLDIER BOY. WE GETTIN' WARM?
JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NEXT RISE. BY THE WAY, I'M--
CAN'T OFFER ANY LIFTS, SOLDIER BOY. WE'RE LATE.
--NOT A SOLDIER. I'M A MARINE.
HEY... STILL IN TIME. KIND'A *FELT* SUCH A TRAGEDY WOULD BRING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OUT. DON'T WANNA INTRUDE ON ANYBODY'S GRIEF--
RIP
--BUT MAYBE YOU PEOPLE NEED TO RETHINK THE OFFER I MADE ON MR. LUPO'S BEHALF. GET YOURSELVES PROTECTED... FROM THE LAW AND STUFF LIKE THIS!
PARTICULARLY YOU *TULLHAM* BOYS. I KNOW AROUND HERE THE TULLHAMS ARE CONSIDERED SORT OF *LEADERS* AN'--
AN' *WE* KNOW YOU'RE THE CITY-BRED PECKERWOOD WHO ***KILLED*** OUR DADDY!
CHARLEY BOB--!
KEEP COMIN', SONNY. YOU CAN BE JUST AS DEAD AS YOUR OLD MAN. SO CAN YOUR BROTHERS. THAT'S ***ONE*** WAY TO REMOVE AN OBSTACLE LIKE YOUR FAMILY.
WITH THE TAME LAW WE GOT IN OUR POCKET... WE'D NEVER SEE THE INSIDE OF A POLICE STATION.

GET WISE! LOTTA YOUR MOONSHINER PALS ARE WAITIN' TO SEE HOW YOU BOYS JUMP. SO, TILL OUR KANSAS CITY THING'S CLINCHED, FORGET THE TULLHAM REP, AGIN' THE HOOCH AN' OTHER FRILLS--
--JUST PRODUCE! THIS IS GONNA HAPPEN. WHY NOT MAKE IT EASY ALL AROUND... AND SURVIVE? NO SHAME IN THAT. YOU HICKS ARE OUTGUNNED.
FIREPOWER IS GOOD--
--FIREPOWER AND POSITION IS EVERYTHING.
THAT'S A LESSON I PICKED UP IN '28 WHEN THEY HAD US DOWN IN NICARAGUA PROTECTING U.S. CITIZENS FROM SANDINO'S REBELS--
LEARNED TO USE A THOMPSON THERE, TOO. AND WHEN I SHOW UP FOR MY DADDY'S BURIAL AND SEE FAMILY THREATENED... I TRULY ITCH TO USE IT AGAIN.
PUT THAT CAR IN GEAR BEFORE THE TEMPTATION OVERWHELMS ME.
JACK, MAYBE WE COULD'VE--
GOTTEN HOSED BY .45 SLUGS! YOU WORKED A CHOPPER ENOUGH T'KNOW THAT'S THE ONLY MAYBE THAT COUNTS!
WHEN I MAKE A PLAY, IT'S ON MY OWN TERMS. AN' I'LL BE SETTIN' SOME TONIGHT--
"--THAT'LL SHOW THE DOUGH BOY WHAT A REAL WAR'S LIKE!"
KYLE! KYLE, YOU SUNNOVA GUN...! NOBODY KNEW YOU WAS COMIN'!
BOY HOWDY! LET THOSE CITY DUDES GO SUCK EGGS... WE GOT ALL THE TULLHAM BROTHERS TOGETHER AGAIN.

NEVER FIGURED SEEIN' YOU AGAIN, KYLE! NOT AFTER THE FALLIN' OUT DADDY HAD WITH YOU OVER TAKIN' GRACE'S SIDE WHEN SHE RAN OFF T'MARRY THAT SALESMAN FROM SPRINGFIELD...!
THE OLD MAN WAS MULE STUBBORN, CHARLEY BOB. ME TOO. WE COULDN'T LIVE TOGETHER OVER THE BUSINESS WITH SIS, STILL... I LIKE TO THINK WE LOVED EACH OTHER. BUT EVEN IF WE DIDN'T--
--WHATEVER THE MARINE CORPS MADE OF ME, I CAN'T STOP BEING A TULLHAM. HARM COMES TO BLOOD KIN... PUTTING IT RIGHT COMES FIRST.
AN' YOU SNEAKED THIS AWAY T'HELP GET THE JOB DONE?! BOY HOWDY! HE'S STILL OZARK!
BUT DON'T GO FORGETTIN' WHO'S OLDEST, KYLE. FIGURE THAT GIVES ME THE RIGHT T'BE IN CHARGE WITH DADDY GONE.
AW, FLOYD! 'FORE WE GO FEUDIN' WITH EACH OTHER... LET'S GET THAT UPSTATE BUNCH LICKED! YOU'VE SEEN THE GUNS WE GOT FOR IT, KYLE--
--THERE'S ALSO THIS! LITTLE SOMETHIN' DUANE AN' ME BORROWED FROM ONE'A THEM ZINC MINES UP TOWARDS JOPLIN. USED IT FOR BLASTIN' OUT TREE STUMPS... TIL
THEY'LL HIT US AGAIN TONIGHT. THERE'S OUR SYCAMORE HOLLOW STILL TO PROTECT 'WELL AS THE HOUSE. CAN'T RISK FLIPPIN' DYNAMITE STICKS AROUND IN THE DARK, BUT WE CAN SURE POST TWO OF US AT EACH SPOT AN'--
THAT'S ONE WAY, FLOYD. IN THE MARINES THEY TALK A LOT ABOUT OBJECTIVES. WHAT'S OUR OBJECTIVE IN THIS FEUD...?
PLIK
OUR LOCAL SNITCH SAID THE TULLHAMS ONLY HAD THEIR MAIN STILL AND THIS ONE BACK UP--
BWAM!

--THAT MEANS THEY'RE OUTTA BUSINESS NOW! AN' FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS... SHORT ONE BROTHER BESIDES!
BE NICE IF IT'S THE WISEMOUTH SOLDIER BOY, HUH?
WHOEVER WE GOT, IT'S A STEP CLOSER TO ENDIN' THIS! I'M FED UP WITH HILLBILLIES AN' HICK TOWNS. ONLY NIGHT LIFE IN THIS PLACE IS LISTENIN' TO THE CRICKETS!
CABINS FOR RENT
COM'N JACK. I GOT A BOTTLE IN MY CABIN. THE REAL STUFF. FEW SHOTS'LL MAKE YOU THINK YOU'RE BACK IN KANSAS CITY.
AMBUSH! THE TULLHAMS! HERE... TWO OF 'EM WAITIN' FOR US! HOW--?!
FLATTEN OUT! A PINEAPPLE'LL FIX 'EM! BUT THERE'S GOTTA BE A THIRD ONE--
BEHIND YOU, YALE... AND THERE'S STILL FOUR OF US.
ANYBODY DIED AT SYCAMORE HOLLOW, IT WAS YOUR INFORMER. WE LEFT HIM TIED THERE... AFTER HE TOLD US THIS WAS YOUR HEADQUARTERS!
BRAAAAAPP

PLINK
WHAM
THE PACKAGE REACHED VINCE LUPO AT HIS PASEO BOULEVARD APARTMENT IN KANSAS CITY. REPORTS OF HIS OPERATIONS DOWNSTATE BEING SYSTEMATICALLY ATTACKED HAD PRECEDED IT. AT FIRST, THE ONLY EXPLANATION SEEMED TO BE THAT JACK YALE HAD TURNED AGAINST HIM...
LUPO ORDERED EVERY MAN HE COULD SPARE INTO THE OZARKS. MOST FAILED TO COME BACK. THOSE WHO DID SURVIVE RAN IN CIRCLES... WHILE THE TULLHAMS RAN A CAR LOADED WITH GASOLINE AND DYNAMITE INTO VINCE'S SHOWPLACE, THE ROADHOUSE BELOW SPRINGFIELD.
...UNTIL HE SAW THE CONTENTS OF THE PACKAGE. AND THE ACCOMPANYING NOTE FROM THE TULLHAM BROTHERS.
THAT CONVINCED HIM HE NEEDED SOMETHING MORE THAN TYPICAL MOB SOLDIERS. AND LUPO PUT THE WORD OUT FOR SLATE.
COM'N NOW, FLOYD. KYLE SAID WE SHOULD JUST GET OUR SUPPLIES AN' HEAD STRAIGHT T' HOME.
McGUGGIN'S GENERAL DRY GOODS STORE FEED TOOL
--I DON'T LIKE HIS WAY OF FIGHTIN'! YOU'D THINK WE WAS THOSE GUERILLAS HE WAS UP AGAINST IN NICARAGUA. HITTIN', RUNNIN', SLIPPIN' AN' HIDIN'! SURE, WE GOT THAT TRASH WHO KILLED DADDY--
--BUT IT COST US OUR LAST STILL! I FEEL LIKE DRINKIN' TULLHAM LIQUOR... I GOTTA BUY IT HERE! NOW WE'RE GOIN' FOR THE BIG FELLA WHO GAVE THE ORDERS... WHAT'S THAT GONNA COST US?
XXX
I AIN'T ONE'A KYLE'S MARINES, CHARLEY BOB! YOU WANNA FOLLOW HIS ORDERS, LITTLE BROTHER, YOU GO HOME--

SOUNDS LIKE A QUESTION YOU SHOULD'VE CONSIDERED SOME TIME AGO, TULLHAM... DEFINITELY BEFORE SITTING DOWN WITH THAT JUG.
WAKEFIELD, IT'S A POOR THING WHEN A MAN COMES INTO YOUR STORE T'DRINK AN' AIN'T WARNED OF STRANGERS NOSIN' ABOUT.
WAKEFIELD...?
KA-BLAM
BLAM!
BWOW
--I ALSO HAVE THIS REVOLVER TO SEE YOU NEVER FINISH CROSSING THE PORCH.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, SON. IF YOU'RE HOPING MY AUTOMATIC WILL JAM AS THEY SOMETIMES DO--

HEY, KYLE! YOU STILL FIDDLIN' AROUND IN TH' CELLAR...? FLOYD AN' CHARLEY BOB ARE FINALLY BACK!
I'M GONNA MAKE SURE THEY DIDN'T FORGET THAT POUCH OF REDMAN I ASKED 'EM T'GET!
FORGET YOUR CHEWIN' TOBACCO, DUANE. JUST MAKE SURE THEY WEREN'T FOLLOWED BEFORE YOU SHOWING YOURSELF AND--
DUANE?! BLAST IT! THAT BONEHEAD NEVER LISTENS!
DUANE! IT'S A TRAP! A TRAP! BACK INSIDE!
FAST! LUPO'S MEN ARE USIN' ME T'DRAW YOU OUT!
NOT 'TIL I'M SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT TOO, LITTLE BROTHER!
KRAK!
BLAM
KER-RAK
K-POW!
POW!
BLAM!
BRATTA-TAT-TAT
POW! POW!
SLATE HAD NEVER LIKED WORKING WITH A MOB MOST JOBS HE PREFERRED TO GO ALONE OR WITH A SMALL HAND-PICKED GROUP, LIKE THE PATROLS HE USED TO LEAD BACK IN THE GREAT WAR...

... STILL, DESPITE HIS MAN'S FOUL UP GUARDING THE KID, THE WEEK OF SCOUTING AND PLANNING SLATE PUT INTO HIS MOVE ON THE TULLHAMS WASN'T WASTED. NOT IF IT HAD ALREADY NETTED THREE BROTHERS OUT OF FOUR.
OKAY. CLOSE IN ON THE HOUSE. BUT FAN OUT AS YOU GO. NO MATTER HOW GOOD THAT MARINE IS--
--HE CAN ONLY COVER ONE DIRECTION AT A TIME!
OH, LORDY...! IT HURTS... S-SOMETHIN'... FIERCE...! BUT IF DUANE... CHAMBERED A ROUND... 'FORE HE FELL...
...MAYBE I CAN... BUY KYLE... A LITTLE... B-BREATHIN' ROOM...!
KRAK!
HOW MUCH KILLIN' THESE YOKELS TAKE...?! NAIL HIM BEFORE--
TOMMY GUN! THE MARINE MUST'VE DUCKED OUT AN' CIRCLED US!
BRAAAAAAP!
HIT THE DIRT!
NOT WHEN THAT HILLBILLY GENERAL'S OUTSMARTED HIMSELF, SLATE! IF HE'S BEHIND US--

--THEN ALL THE COVER WE NEED IS RIGHT HERE FOR THE TAKIN'!
BRAAATTA-TAT TAT-TAT
KA-POW!
KRAK!
POW
WHRRRRRR
KLIK!
CHARLEY BOB...? CHARLEY BOB...?! DON'T GIVE UP ON ME NOW, LITTLE BROTHER... THE WORST IS OVER!
ALMOST, MARINE...! IF I HADN'T FIGURED YOU WERE TOO SHARP TO JUST LEAVE ENEMIES A CONVENIENT SHELTER--
KRAK!
--AND THEN REMEMBERED YOUR OTHER BROTHER SHOUTING ABOUT YOU WORKING IN THE CELLAR!

SLATE KNEW HE HAD RUSHED THE SHOT. BUT AS LONG AS THE 45 SLUG AT LEAST GRAZED ITS TARGET...
KRASH!
...KYLE TULLHAM WAS DOWN.
ALL SLATE HAD TO DO WAS GO INTO THE WOODS AND FINISH HIM.
I GOT ANOTHER BATCH OF MEN WORKING THEIR WAY IN FROM THE HIGHWAY. TRY ESCAPING CROSS-COUNTRY, MARINE... YOU'RE GOING TO RUN SMACK INTO THEM.
SILENCE. SLATE GRIMACED, PAUSED TO CHECK THE WEAPON TULLHAM DROPPED...
...AND FINDING ITS MAGAZINE EMPTY, PLUNGED INTO THE TREES. A FEW FEET IN THERE WERE BLOODSTAINS. NOT PROFUSE, BUT ENOUGH TO FOLLOW.
THE WOODS WERE EERIE, BRINGING BACK BAD MEMORIES OF THE WAR, THE ARGONNE. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE'D GONE FROM RESTLESS VETERAN TO STRIKE-BREAKER, RUM-RUNNER, AND FINALLY GUN-FOR-HIRE... SLATE WASN'T ENJOYING A FIGHT. HIS EYES STAYED ON THE SPLASHES OF CRIMSON...
WROK!
...BUT HIS MIND WASN'T RACING AHEAD TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY COULD BE USED TO MISDIRECT!
KA-DOW!
IF THE GROUND HAD BEEN HARDER, THE ARM WOULD HAVE BROKE. STILL, HIS FINGERS LOST THE AUTOMATIC...
THOMP
...AND IF HIS OTHER HAND HADN'T MANAGED TO WRESTLE OUT THE REVOLVER, SLATE'S NEXT LOSS WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS HEAD!

KYLE TULLHAM PLUNGED AWAY FROM HIM, CRASHING THROUGH THE WOODS, ALL EARLIER STEALTH GONE... THE WOUND, THE STRAIN OF THE ATTACK HAD TAKEN THEIR TOLL.
...CLOSING THE GAP.
TULLHAM...! IT'S OVER--
CURSING THE PAIN AND SWELLING IN HIS LEFT ARM, SLATE PLUNGED AFTER HIM OVER THE ROUGH TERRAIN, SENSING THE KILL...
--THIS IS AS FAR AS IT GOES. YOU'VE DONE BETTER THAN ANYBODY I'VE EVER GONE UP AGAINST, MARINE. BUT WHAT'S IT COME TO...?
YOUR BROTHERS, HOME, BUSINESS... SACRIFICED! WITH YOUR MILITARY BACKGROUND, COMBAT SKILLS... WE'RE A LOT ALIKE. I SHOULD UNDERSTAND. AND YET...
--I'M A TULLHAM.
SPRONG!
THIS IS A FEUD...! OBJECTIVE IS... WIPE OUT THE OTHER SIDE... LONG AS YOU'VE ANY FAMILY... TO KEEP FIGHTING...! THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE...! YOU'RE ONLY IN THIS FOR PAY--
ONE GRENADE MIGHT NOT HAVE DONE THE FINAL JOB KYLE TULLHAM HAD IN MIND, BUT THE CANVAS POUCH HE CARRIED-- TAKEN LONG AGO FROM THE CAR OF JACK YALE -- CONTAINED SEVERAL MORE.
KA-WAM!
SLATE BARELY HAD TIME TO LEAP... WHEN THE DAM GAVE WAY.

PAZZO! THE HILLBILLY WAS CRAZY, SLATE!
MAYBE. BUT THE SOUND OF THE BLAST DREW MY LAST BUNCH OF MEN... MOST OF 'EM COUNTY LAW ON YOUR PAYROLL, LUPO. FASTEST ROUTE WAS A PATH ALONG THE STREAM BELOW THE DAM--
--KIND OF THING A LOCAL BOY'D KNOW, EVEN WITH A BUM ARM, I'M A PRETTY STRONG SWIMMER. A LOT OF GUYS IN THAT POSSE WEREN'T!
SON OF A--NO! I'M NOT LETTIN' IT GET TO ME. LIKE I SAID EARLIER, SLATE, ALL THE LOSSES DON'T MATTER. IMPORTANT THING IS... THE TULLHAM BOYS ARE FINISHED!
HEY. WE WANT MORE COFFEE, WE'LL YELL FOR IT, MRS. HOLLIS. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY BREAKFA--
HOLLIS IS THE NAME OF THE SALESMAN I MARRIED TO GET AWAY FROM HOME, MR. LUPO. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN I STOPPED BEING WHAT I WAS BORN!
YAAHHHHHHH!
IF THE TULLHAM BOYS ARE FINISHED--
--THERE'S STILL A TULLHAM GIRL!
AS THE CLEAVER FLASHED INTO VINCE LUPO, SLATE SUDDENLY REALIZED HOW MUCH THE BATTLE AGAINST KYLE TULLHAM HAD WORN HIM DOWN. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD EXPLAIN...
...A MAN WITH A .45 SERVICE REVOLVER HOLSTERED NEXT TO HIS INJURED LEFT ARM...
...BEING STUPID ENOUGH TO GET CAUGHT WITH A COFFEE CUP IN HIS RIGHT HAND. AND EVEN AS SLATE LET THE CUP DROP...
THOK
...IT WAS TOO LATE.

IN MY DREAM THE WOLVES HAVE GROWN BOLD FOR LACK OF PREY.
I FEEL THEIR HOT BREATH ON MY FACE. THEY'LL FILL THEIR EMPTY, ACHING BELLIES WITH MY FLESH.
IT'S NO DREAM.

CREDITS: STORY- CHARLES SANTINO, ART- VAL SEMEIKS, LETTERS - D. KLEIN.

BLOOD and ICE

WINTER, 1902. DAWN IN CANADA'S YUKON TERRITORY, ONE HUNDRED MILES EAST OF THE ALASKAN BORDER.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT A WOMAN THAT DRIVES A MAN OUT OF HIS MIND?

WOOMPF!

YIIPE!

MY WOMAN DROVE SCHRADER OUT OF HIS, SO HE TOOK HER AND LEFT ME FOR DEAD.

SHE THINKS SHE'LL GET A BETTER DEAL WITH HIM. SHE'S WRONG.

POW!
POW!
DAMN! THE NOISE OF MY FIRST SHOT SHOULD'VE SCARED AWAY THE OTHERS.
JUST ONE BULLET LEFT... FOR SCHRADER.
POW!
DOGS BARKING. THEY HAVEN'T GOTTEN FAR.

THERE.
THE DOGS ARE CRAZY WITH HUNGER.
SCHRADER'S LOST CONTROL.
GRRRR!
RRRR!
GRRR
POW!
HAH!
EAT HEARTY, YOU FILTHY BEASTS!
AAAHH
KEECHA, MY PRIZE.

WHEN A WOMAN GOES SOUR, NOTHING WILL KEEP HER FROM HATING YOU. NOT EVEN SAVING HER LIFE.
I SEE THE HATE IN HER EYES, HIDING BEHIND HER FEAR.
I KNOW SHE'LL TRY TO KILL ME.
IT HAPPENS SOONER THAN I GUESS.
THE DOGS ARE BACK UNDER MY COMMAND.
FORT YUKON IS THREE WEEKS AWAY.
SOME FOOL THERE WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE HER OFF MY HANDS.
SHE'LL KEEP ME WARM UNTIL THEN.
END.